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DEPT FOR PM/DTCC- BLU LANTERN COORDINATOR

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/29/2018  
TAGS: [ETTC](#) [KMOC](#) [GT](#)  
SUBJECT: GUATEMALA: BLUE LANTERN POST-SHIPMENT END-USE  
CHECK ON LICENSE 050092123

REF: A. STATE 130457  
[1](#)B. CIA TD-314/041106-08 OF 29 MAY 2008

Classified By: Political Officer Lance Hegerle, for reasons 1.4(a, b, and d)

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: In response to reftel a, PolMil Officer researched the bona fides of the arms import company Aguila del Desierto, examined records regarding the weapons imported under license 050092123, and the company's relationship with the freight forwarding company Sercogua. The research included an on-site inspection of Aguila del Desierto; an interview with the company's owner; records checks of both the company and the owner with the Guatemala's Arms and Munitions Control Department (DECAM); and coordination with other agencies at post regarding Sercogua. As a result of the investigation, Post has determined that Aguila del Desierto received the reftel weapons and has a limited business relationship with Sercogua. Post has no prejudicial information regarding Aguila del Desierto. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (SBU) On December 17, PolMil Officer conducted an on-site inspection of Aguila del Desierto located at Centro Comercial Plaza la villa de Guadalupe 3-24, Zone 4, Local 7 Villa Nueva, and interviewed the company's owner, Erick Geovani Gonzalez Gonzalez. Gonzalez was fully cooperative during the interview, offered complete access to his records, and a tour of the facility. Aguila del Desierto is located in a small shopping complex in a high-crime suburb of Guatemala City called Villa Nueva. According to Gonzalez, he owned a weapons store named Desierto in another part of city from 1991 until 1995, but closed that business to open Aguila del Desierto at his current location in 1995. He stated he imports rifles and shotguns from the U.S., and handguns from Argentina. He added that he would love to import handguns from the U.S. but has been told that the U.S. will not export handguns above .22 caliber.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Aguila del Desierto consists of a 15 foot by 10 foot showroom accessible only via a heavy security gate, a small utility storage room, and a weapons storage area located above the utility storage room accessible only via a portable ladder. The weapons storage area is 4 feet wide, 10 feet long, and 4 feet high, and is made of extra thick cement lined on both the interior and exterior with steel plates. The weapons storage room contains motion detectors, a computer linked to a video monitoring system, a dedicated phone line, and water. PolMil Officer noticed two loaded handguns in the utility room and another handgun and a loaded shotgun positioned at the entrance to the weapons storage area. When asked about the loaded weapons, Gonzalez stated that crime in Villa Nueva had always been bad, but recently had become much worse. He added that he had never been robbed, but that he, his mother, and his employee were prepared to fight off attackers long enough to lock themselves in the weapons storage room. While the store is small and the weapons storage room is unorthodox, it is one

of the most secure seen by PolMil Officer.

¶4. (SBU) According to DECAM records Aguila del Desierto has committed a few minor infractions, but has passed all routine inspections without major incident. According to DECAM's Director, Colonel David Barrientos, Aguila del Desierto is a small-scale weapons store that has operated within local laws and regulations. Aguila del Desierto's records indicate that the company sells virtually all weapons imported from the U.S. to other weapons dealers, but sells no more than nine weapons to any given store. Gonzalez stated that residents of Villa Nueva tend to purchase handguns for self protection as opposed to rifles, but if he could import hand guns from the U.S. he could sell many to local residents. Aguila del Desierto's books indicated that 31 of the 100 weapons imported under license 050092123 are still in inventory, and PolMil officer verified that all 31 weapons were located in the weapons storage area.

¶5. (S/NF) Per reftel a, PolMil Officer made inquiries with country team members and host country authorities regarding concerns raised about the company Sercogua (ref b). Sercogua is not currently the subject of any ongoing investigations for participating in illicit trafficking. Post has no new evidence or intelligence to either support or contradict concerns regarding Sercogua raised in ref b.

¶6. (S/NF) Gonzalez claims to have no regular business relationship with Sercogua, but stated that he did use the company to handle port and customs issues for his last shipment. He added that he was directed by the company Air-Sea Forwarders to contact Sercogua regarding the shipment. When questioned about the importation process he

stated that he simply requests permission to import weapons from DECAM, which he then sends to Valor Corporation. He added that Valor Corporation completes all the paperwork required by U.S. authorities and organizes the shipment of the weapons to Guatemala. He stated that he never picks the local freight forwarder and that normally it is not Sercogua.

PolMil officer discussed the importation process with several other arms importers and they confirm Gonzalez's statements that it is the U.S. based company that selects the freight forwarding company, not the local company. Based upon the information available at post, there is no substantial relationship between Aguila del Desierto and Sercogua.

¶7. (SBU) Conclusion: As a result of the investigation, Post finds that all weapons imported under license 050092123 are either still in Aguila del Desierto's inventory or were sold to other weapons dealers following relevant local laws and regulations. Aguila del Desierto operates well within DECAM's regulations and occupies a secure, if somewhat unique, facility. Post has no information that would be prejudicial to approval of future import license request on behalf of this company.

McFarland